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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the ranked importance of the teaching tasks to be demonstrated by physical education student teachers as perceived by cooperating teachers and supervisors. The study was designed specifically to detect the nature of the tasks ranked highly by each group. Questionnaires were sent to 91 cooperating teachers and 30 university supervisors, asking them to rank the importance of 15 teaching tasks with respect to their expectations of student teachers. Responses received from 85 subjects were compared for differences between cooperating teachers and supervisors and by gender. The two groups concurred with respect to the importance of demonstrating ability to self-assess, writing functional lesson/unit plans, and knowledge of subject matter. A discussion is presented on the results of an analysis of the data collected. Data are presented on tables and references are included. (JD)

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Ranked Importance of Student Teacher Tasks as Perceived by Cooperating Teachers and University Supervisors

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Several studies have focused on the mutual perceptions of the student teaching experience as viewed by the student teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor (Mawson, 1974; Burnstine, 1979; Gallemore, 1979; Nichols, 1980; Webb, 1980). These investigations revealed that the importance of various aspects of the experience often vary widely as a function of the status of participant. Specific tasks associated with teaching performance were omitted in this research. A task, as defined by Doyle (1979), is described as an explicit or implicit set of requirements specifying what an individual must do to cope successfully with a given environment. The relationship between the ranks assigned to specific tasks by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor provides a clearer definition of the perception of the importance of the behavior associated with the student teacher's performance. The purpose of this study was to determine the ranked importance of the teaching tasks to be demonstrated during the student teaching experience as perceived by active cooperating teachers and supervisors within the field of physical education. More specifically, the study was designed to detect the nature of the tasks ranked highly by cooperating teachers and

university supervisors. It was hypothesized that cooperating teachers would rank tasks associated with process variables (Locke, 1984) more highly than content variables (Locke, 1984). It was speculated that a converse ranking would occur among university supervisors.

Questionnaires were sent to 91 active cooperating teachers and 30 university supervisors randomly drawn from records secured from seven (7) colleges or universities in Michigan during the winter, 1986 semester. Seventy (70) percent of the questionnaires returned were suitable for analysis ($n = 85$). Subjects were asked to rank the importance of the teaching tasks indicated below with respect to their expectations of student teachers.

1. Demonstrate the abilty to assess instructional performance
2. Write functional lesson and unit plans
3. Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter
4. Communicate effectively with students in a positive manner
5. Actively monitor student performance
6. Select activities which meet the needs of a given group
7. Demonstrate knowledge of learner characteristics

8. Evaluate students objectively
9. Provide experience and instruction which maximizes student performance
10. Provide reinforcement and corrective feedback to students during instruction
11. Manage equipment efficiently
12. Keep accurate records
13. Dress and act professionally
14. Manage inappropriate student behavior effectively
15. Provide appropriate activities in a safe environment

Data analysis took place through the following descriptive and statistical procedures:

1. Frequency count of ranks assigned to each variable across:
   A. Gender
   B. Subject classification
2. Independent *t*-tests on the mean ranks assigned by the subjects across:
   A. Gender
   B. Subject classification

Figure 1. Mean Rank Order of Teaching Tasks by University Supervisors.

Variable	Males (n=16)	Females (n=10)	Overall (n=26)
Demonstrate Ability to Self-Assess	3.9 (4)	5.5 (9)	4.5 (6)
Write Functional Lesson/Unit Plans	*5.6 (10)	4.0 (3)	5.0 (8)
Knowledge of Subject Matter	*4.8 (7)	2.2 (1)	3.8 (3)
Communicate Positively/Effectively	2.5 (1)	2.9 (2)	2.7 (1)
Actively Monitor Student Performance	5.4 (8)	5.6 (10)	5.5 (9)
Select Activities Based on Student Needs	3.6 (3)	4.8 (6)	4.1 (4)
Knowledge of Learner Characteristics	4.1 (5)	5.1 (7)	4.5 (5)
Evaluate Students Objectively	5.4 (8)	7.3 (11)	6.2 (10)
Experiences Maximize Student Performance	2.5 (1)	4.4 (4)	3.2 (2)
Reinforcement/Correction During Instruction	4.5 (6)	5.3 (8)	4.8 (7)
Equipment Management	9.0 (13)	10.2 (13)	8.8 (12)
Accurate Records	8.4 (12)	9.4 (12)	8.8 (12)
Dress and Act Professionally	*5.6 (10)	4.4 (4)	8.5 (11)

* $p < .01$

Figure 2. Top Five Teaching Tasks as Ranked by Female University Supervisors.

1. Knowledge of Subject Matter
2. Communicate Effectively/Positively
3. Write Functional Lesson/Unit Plans
4. Experiences which Maximize Student Performance
5. Dress and Act Professionally

(n = 10)

Figure 3. Top Five Teaching Tasks as Ranked by Male University Supervisors.

1. Experiences Maximizing Student Performance (tie)
1. Communicate Positively/Effectively (tie)
3. Select Activities Based on Student Needs
4. Demonstrate Ability to Self-Assess
5. Knowledge of Learner Characteristics

(n = 16)

Ranked

7

Figure 4. University Supervisors' Frequency of Number One Ranking by Variable.

Variable	%
Demonstrate Ability to Self-Assess	15.5
Write Functional Lesson/Unit Plans	7.5
Knowledge of Subject Matter	23.0
Communicate Positively/Effectively	31.0
Actively Monitor Student Performance	-
Select Activities Based on Student Needs	-
Knowledge of Learner Characteristics	-
Evaluate Students Objectively	-
Experiences Maximize Student Performance	23.0
Reinforcement/Correction During Instruction	-
Equipment Management	-
Accurate Records	-
Dress and Act Professionally	-

(n = 26)

Figure 5. Mean Rank Order of Teaching Tasks by Cooperating Teachers.

Variable	Males (n=34)	Females (n=25)	Overall (n=59)
Demonstrate Ability to Self-Assess	7.1 (9)	6.9 (6)	7.9 (9)
Write Functional Lesson/Unit Plans	8.4 (12)	8.3 (9)	8.4 (12)
Knowledge of Subject Matter	4.9 (3)	4.2 (2)	4.6 (2)
Communicate Positively/Effectively	2.4 (1)	2.2 (1)	2.5 (1)
Actively Monitor Student Performance	6.5 (8)	7.9 (8)	7.2 (8)
Select Activities Based on Student Needs	6.1 (7)	7.3 (7)	7.2 (8)
Knowledge of Learner Characteristics	7.3 (10)	9.0 (11)	8.1 (10)
Evaluate Students Objectively	*7.4 (11)	9.4 (13)	8.3 (11)
Experiences Maximize Student Performance	4.8 (2)	5.6 (5)	5.2 (3)
Reinforcement/Correction During Instruction	5.3 (4)	5.2 (3)	5.3 (4)
Equipment Management	9.9 (14)	10.9 (15)	10.4 (15)
Accurate Records	10.0 (15)	9.7 (14)	9.9 (14)
Dress and Act Professionally	8.5 (13)	9.1 (12)	8.8 (13)
Manage Inappropriate Student Behavior	*6.0 (6)	5.3 (4)	5.5 (5)
Appropriate Activities in Safe Environment	**5.4 (5)	8.4 (10)	6.7 (7)

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Figure 6. Top Five Tasks as Ranked by Female Cooperating Teachers.

1. Communicate Positively/Effectively
2. Knowledge of Subject Matter
3. Reinforcement/Correction During Instruction
4. Manage Inappropriate Student Behavior Effectively
5. Experiences Maximizing Student Performance

(n = 25)

Figure 7. Top Five Teaching Tasks as Ranked by Male Cooperating Teachers.

1. Communicate Positively/Effectively
2. Experiences Maximizing Student Performance
3. Knowledge of Subject Matter
4. Reinforcement/Correction During Instruction
5. Appropriate Activities in Safe Environment

(n = 34)

Ranked

10

Figure 8. Cooperating Teachers' Frequency of Number One Ranking by Variable.

Variable	%
Demonstrate Ability to Self-Assess	8
Write Functional Lesson/Unit Plans	0
Knowledge of Subject Matter	14
Communicate Positively/Effectively	49
Actively Monitor Student Performance	0
Select Activities Based on Student Needs	0
Knowledge of Learner Characteristics	0
Evaluate Students Objectively	0
Experiences Maximize Student Performance	8
Reinforcement/Correction During Instruction	0
Equipment Management	0
Accurate Records	0
Dress and Act Professionally	5
Manage Inappropriate Student Behavior	8
Appropriate Activities in a Safe Environment	7

(n = 59)

Figure 9. Mean Rank of Teaching Tasks: Cooperating Teachers vs. University Supervisors.

Variable	Coop. Teach (n=59)	Univ. Super. (n=26)
Demonstrate Ability to Self-Assess	*7.4 (9)	4.5 (6)
Write Functional Lesson/Unit Plans	**8.4 (12)	5.0 (8)
Knowledge of Subject Matter	4.6 (2)	3.8 (3)
Communicate Positively/Effectively	2.5 (1)	2.7 (1)
Actively Monitor Student Performance	7.2 (8)	5.5 (9)
Select Activities Based on Student Needs	*6.6 (6)	4.1 (4)
Knowledge of Learner Characteristics	***8.1 (10)	4.5 (5)
Evaluate Students Objectively	8.3 (11)	6.2 (10)
Experiences Maximize Student Performance	5.2 (3)	3.3 (2)
Reinforcement/Correction During Instruction	5.3 (4)	4.8 (7)
Manage Equipment Efficiently	*10.4 (15)	9.9 (13)
Keep Accurate Records	9.9 (14)	8.8 (12)
Dress and Act Professionally	8.9 (13)	8.5 (11)
Manage Inappropriate Student Behavior	5.5 (5)	-
Appropriate Activities in Safe Environment	6.7 (7)	-

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .003$ *** $p < .0001$

Discussion

An analysis of the data collected indicates that the university supervisors and cooperating teachers surveyed concurred with respect to the importance of the first three tasks ranked (see Figure 9). Statistically significant differences were detected, however, in the fourth and fifth ranked variables. University supervisors ranked content variables (Locke, 1984) significantly higher than the process variables (Locke, 1984) receiving corresponding ranks by cooperating teachers. These results support the "practicality ethic" described by Doyle and Ponder (1977). The cooperating teachers in this sample appear to associate an individual's ability to control student activity through positive means with effective teaching. The "busy, happy, and good" phenomenon described by Placek (1982) appears to be a common perception among the subjects who participated in this study.

Male and female cooperating teachers agreed with respect to three of the top five tasks ranked (see Figure 5). Females, however, ranked the management of inappropriate student behavior significantly higher ($\bar{X}$ = 5.3) than their male counterparts ($\bar{X}$ = 6.0). Males, on

the other hand, ranked the provision of appropriate activities in a safe environment signicantly higher ($\bar{X}$ = 5.4) than female cooperating teachers ($\bar{X}$ = 8.4).

Male and female university supervisors expressed widely divergent views with respect to the professional role of the individual. While both groups ranked communicating positively and effectively with students very highly, the importance of planning, knowledge of subject matter, and the selection of activities varied.

There should be little doubt that this phenomenon seriously weakens the effect that any physical education teacher education program could have on the undergraduate trainee. If, as Tinning and Siedentop (1985) indicate, monitoring and feedback by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor play an important role in the performance of the student teacher, this research study indicates that clearer definitions of tasks expected of student teachers must be developed. Tasks must not only be defined but mutually agreed upon for the supervisory team to enhance program effectiveness and increase professional accountability.

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